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National Report Shows Wildlife-Watching Is Worth Big Money

Pacific Region States benefit economically from people who want to view wildlife

Eleven million Americans in Oregon, Washington, California, Nevada, Idaho and Hawaii spent nearly \$5 billion in those states in 2001 to observe, watch, photograph or feed wildlife, according to a report released recently by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The report, titled *2001 National and State Economic Impacts of Wildlife Watching Addendum* relied on data collected in the Service's *2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation*. It examines national participation in wildlife watching, expenditures associated with this activity, economic activity generated by these expenditures, employment created and income associated with expenditures, and associated state and federal tax revenue.

Nationally, a total of about 66 million Americans spent more than \$38.4 billion in 2001 observing, feeding, or photographing wildlife. The report puts this number in perspective: If wildlife watching were a company, its sales of \$38.4 billion would rank it 33rd in the Forbes 500 list for 2001 – placing it just ahead of Motorola and Kmart.

Direct expenditures by wildlife watchers included expenditures for items such as cameras, binoculars and bird food, and for trip-related expenses such as lodging, transportation and food. For each \$1 of direct spending associated with wildlife watching, an additional \$1.49 of economic activity was generated.

Only participants whose principal motivation for the trip, activity or expenditure is wildlife-related were counted. Residential participants include those whose activities are within one mile of home. Nonresidential participants refers to people who take trips or outings of at least one mile. In the six Pacific Region states, 11.3 million people age 16 and older participated in wildlife watching activities and spent money to do so.

The survey did not include trips to zoos, circuses, aquariums, museums, or for scouting game.

“Many Americans enjoy watching wildlife, however we often overlook the positive impact these activities have on state and local economies,” said Service Director Steve Williams.

A breakdown of the nearly \$5 billion spent in Pacific Region states on wildlife-watching shows that California places first both nationally and locally at \$2.5 billion, which created or supported 61,360 jobs. Wildlife-watchers in the other states spent like this: Washington, \$979.7 million (22,439 jobs); Oregon, \$769.4 million (21,535 jobs); Nevada, \$250.1 million (4,207 jobs); Idaho, \$227.5 million (5,938 jobs); and Hawaii, \$131.6 million (2,536 jobs).

California and Washington ranked first and eighth, respectively, on a list of the top 10 states that generated the most dollars economic output and jobs because of wildlife-watching. California generated \$5.1 billion and Washington generated \$1.7 million for the state, respectively. Hawaii and Idaho generated significant numbers of out-of-state visitors interested in spending money to watch wildlife. In Idaho in 2001, 1% of the total economic output expressed as the gross State product was generated by wildlife-watchers.

The full report is available on-line at <http://federalaid.fws.gov>

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 542 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

For more information about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
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